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FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO INTSUM COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
INFO TREASURY DEPT WASHDC PRIORITY 0000  
SECDEF WASHDC 0000  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC 0000  
NSC WASHDC 0000  
IRAN COLLECTIVE  
CTF PROVIDE CONFORT (INCIRLIK AB TU)//FOR POLAD//  
DIA WASHDC//DE4//  
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK  
USCENTCO? NACDILL AFB FL//FOR POLAD//  
USDOCO SOUTH NAPLES IT//INTAF/FOR POLAD//  
COMS IXFLT  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
NSA FT MEADE MD  
USIA WASHDC 0000  
ONI SUITLAND MD//SPEAR//  
JICPAC HONOLULU HI  
MARCORINTACT QUANTICO VA//MCIA11//

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 249803

LONDON FOR TUELLER  
PARIS FOR ALLEGRONE  
MOSCOW FOR FITZPATRICK  
RONE ALSO FOR VATICAN AND MFO FOR DIRECTOR GENERAL  
DOD/ISA FOR NESA  
CINCEUR FOR POLAD  
CINCUSNAVEUR FOR INTAF  
SECDEF WASHDC FOR ISI  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR DJCS/J-5  
NSC FOR PARRIS  
NSA FOR CHIEF G GROUP  
USVIENNA FOR UNVIE  
OTHER ADDRESSEES FOR CHIEFS OF NISSION

E.O. 12356: DECL: OCTOBER 20, 2005

TAGS: PINR SY  
SUBJECT: INTSUM: SYRIA - PEACE-PROCESS STAGNATION

(TEXT) THE FOLLOWING IS AN INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT THAT RAN IN THE SECRETARY'S MORNING SUMMARY ON THE DATE INDICATED. IN THE INTEREST OF PROMOTING WIDER DISSEMINATION, CERTAIN CLASSIFICATIONS OF INFORMATION CANNOT BE INCLUDED.

¶1. BEGIN SUMMARY. SYRIA HAS TOUGHENED ITS PEACE-PROCESS POSITION SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN INTERIM AGREEMENT. ASAD IS PROBABLY NOT CAPABLE OF MAKING THE GESTURES THAT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO JUMP START THIS TRACK DURING AN ISRAELI ELECTION YEAR. END SUMMARY.

¶2. THE SIGNING OF THE INTERIM AGREEMENT HAS INCREASED SYRIA'S ISOLATION, AND THE AMMAN ECONOMIC SUMMIT, IN WHICH SYRIA WILL NOT PARTICIPATE, WILL INCREASE IT ANOTHER STEP. ASAD BELIEVES RABIN WILL EXPLOIT THIS DEEPENING ISOLATION AND THE UPCOMING ISRAELI ELECTIONS TO TRY TO WIN CONCESSIONS FROM DAMASCUS. IN RESPONSE, ASAD AND THE SENIOR SYRIAN LEADERSHIP HAVE DUG IN.

¶3. IN A LENGTHY OCTOBER 11 INTERVIEW WITH THE EGYPTIAN DAILY AL-AHRAM, ASAD WAS AT HIS MOST STUBBORN. "NO MATTER HOW THINGS CHANGE, WE WILL NOT DO ANYTHING WE DO NOT BELIEVE IN." ISRAEL WAS AT FAULT IN THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE EARLY-WARNING STATIONS. ISRAELI-MANNED EARLY-WARNING STATIONS ON THE GOLAN WOULD BE AN INFRINGEMENT ON SYRIAN SOVEREIGNTY. "MEETING FOR THE SAKE OF MEETING" BENEFITED ONLY ISRAEL. TECHNICAL EXPERTS HAD NO REASON TO MEET UNTIL POLITICAL DECISION-MAKERS HAVE MADE A DECISION.

TONE MORE NEGATIVE

¶4. FOREIGN MINISTER SHARA HAS USED A SHARPER TONE RECENTLY, TO PUT PRESSURE ON OTHER ARAB STATES AND THE

PALESTINIANS NOT TO TAKE STEPS SYRIA SAYS WOULD HARM ITS NEGOTIATING POSITION. HE TOLD THE EGYPTIAN WEEKLY ROSE AL-YUSUF ON SEPTEMBER 30 THE AMMAN SUMMIT WOULD "GREATLY HARM" THE SYRIAN AND LEBANESE TRACKS AND THAT "ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ANY ARAB COUNTRY WOULD WEAKEN SYRIAN'S STANCE IN THE ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS." ARAB STATES, HE ASSERTED, WOULD "FACE DANGERS" IF ISRAEL SUCCEEDED IN CONCLUDING REGIONAL-COOPERATION AGREEMENTS IN AMMAN. AT THE UN ON OCTOBER 3 SHARA SAID SYRIA WOULD "NEITHER SUPPORT NOR SEEK TO HAMPER REGIONAL AGREEMENTS" BUT THAT "ANY USE OF THESE AGREEMENTS TO HARM THE NATIONAL AND PAN-ARAB INTEREST AND RIGHTS OF SYRIA WILL COMPEL US TO RECONSIDER OUR POSITION.

#### WHAT SYRIA CAN AND CANNOT DO

15. BEYOND SUCH RHETORIC, SYRIA CAN DO LITTLE TO IMPEDE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JORDANIAN-ISRAELI TREATY OR THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN INTERIM AGREEMENT. THE PALESTINIAN REJECTIONIST GROUPS RESIDING IN DAMASCUS HAVE NEVER BEEN EFFECTIVE PLAYERS ON THE PALESTINIAN SCENE. ASAD APPEARS NOT TO DELUDE HIMSELF ON THIS POINT, AND THERE HAVE BEEN NO SIGNS THAT SYRIA HAS STEPPED UP ITS LIMITED SUPPORT TO THESE GROUPS.

16. BUT SYRIA CAN PREVENT MOVEMENT ON THE ISRAELI-LEBANESE TRACK AND SLOW NORMALIZATION BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE WIDER ARAB WORLD. OTHER ARAB STATES BELIEVE THE SYRIAN-ISRAELI TRACK MUST BE SOLVED BEFORE A TRULY NEW DYNAMIC CAN BE UNLEASHED IN THE AREA. SYRIA PLAYS ON WIDESPREAD ARAB FEARS OF THE "DANGER" TO THE REGION OF A STRENGTHENED ISRAEL AND ON ANTI-ISRAELI SENTIMENT PREVALENT AMONG THE GENERAL POPULATION IN MOST ARAB COUNTRIES TO KEEP ARAB NORMALIZATION WITH ISRAEL AT BAY. MEANWHILE IT WILL URGE EGYPT TO SUPPORT SYRIA PUBLICLY AND LOBBY WASHINGTON ON ITS BEHALF.

#### STEADFAST SYRIA

17. ASAD'S RIGID VIEW OF WHAT IS NEEDED (COMPLIANCE WITH 242 AND 338, I. E., FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE TERRITORY ISRAEL OCCUPIED IN 1967) PRECLUDES HIM FROM OFFERING THE PUBLIC DIPLOMACY GESTURES - MUCH LESS SUBSTANTIVE CONCESSIONS - NEEDED TO GET THE BALL ROLLING. ASAD BELIEVES THAT ANY GESTURE HE MIGHT OFFER, EVEN PROCEDURAL, IN THE ABSENCE OF CONCRETE ASSURANCES THAT THE GOLAN WILL BE RETURNED IN FULL WOULD BE A MAJOR AND UNREQUITED CONCESSION TO ISRAEL. CONSTRAINED FROM ACTION BY THIS VIEW, HE WAITS FOR THE UNITED STATES TO MAKE THE FIRST GESTURE AND BROKER THE GRAND DEAL OF FULL WITHDRAWAL FOR FULL PEACE.

18. WITHOUT A US-BROKERED SETTLEMENT, SYRIA WILL CONTENT ITSELF WITH PLEDGING ALLEGIANCE TO THE PROCESS AND REITERATING A POSITION THAT HAS CHANGED LITTLE SINCE THE 1991 MADRID CONFERENCE: SYRIA WANTS PEACE (ON ITS OWN TERMS); ISRAEL'S "IMPOSSIBLE DEMANDS<sup>11</sup> ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE LACK OF PROGRESS; THE UNITED STATES MUST INTERCEDE WITH ISRAEL IF PEACE IS TO BE ACHIEVED; AND "NO PEACE" IS BETTER THAN "PEACE WITHOUT HONOR." (DRAFTED OCTOBER 20 BY INR/NESA: CONNY MAYER)

CHRISTOPHER